Thursday
Feb. 3rd

1927

Fate always contrives that I begin the new year in February. I ask, why another volume? (but here's an innovation: this is not a book but a block — so lazy am I about making writing books nowadays) What is the purpose of them? L: taking up a volume the other day said Lord save him if I died first & he had to read through these. My handwriting deteriorates. And do I say anything interesting? I can always waste an idle hour reading them; & then, oh yes, I shall write my memoirs out of them, one of these days. That reminds me of the Webbs: ~~that~~ those 36 strenuous hours at Liphook, in an emphatic lodging house, with blue books in the passage: & those entirely devoted — by which I mean those entirely integrated people. Their secret is that they have by nature no divisions apt to fritter them away: their impact is solid & entire — without eyes & ears (but Mrs Webb listens in & prefers Mozart to Handel, if I may guess) one can come down with more of a weight upon bread & butter or whatever the substance is before one. On a steely watery morning we swiftly tramped over a heathy common talking, talking. In their efficiency & glibness one traces perfectly adapted machinery: but talk by machinery does not charm, or suggest: it cuts the grass of the mind close at the roots. I'm too hurried to write. Mrs W. is far less ornamental than of old: wispy untidy drab, with a stain on her skirt & a key on her watch chain; as if she had cleared the decks & we rolled her sleeves & was working, for the end ~~but~~ but working for ~~the end~~

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1927

Sat. 12th Feb.

Exactly what has happened in the Clive Mary affair I cannot say. Did he not sheepishly admit, in the kitchen the other night, that he was putting it off till March? & then, casually & jauntily tell me as if by chance, the other afternoon, here, that he was giving up all. But won't Mary mind? What does she do? — that was practically his answer.

Vita's prose is too fluent. I've been reading it, & it makes my pen run. When I've read a classic, I am curbed & — not castrated: no the opposite: I cant think of the word at the moment. Had I been writing P to T I should have run off whole pools of this coloured water: & then (I think) found my own method of attack. It is my distinction as a writer I think to get this clear & my expression exact. Were I writing travels I should wait till some angle emerged: & go for that. The method of writing smooth narrative cant be right: things dont happen in one's mind like that. But she is very skilful & golden voiced.

This makes me think that I have to read To the L. tomorrow & Monday, straight through in print: straight through, owing to my curious methods, for the first time. I want to read largely & freely once: then to niggle over details.

But I am forgetting, after 3 days, the most important event in my life since marriage — so Clive described it: Bobo shingled me. Mr. Cizec has bingled me. I am short haired for life. Having no longer, I think, any claims to beauty, the convenience of this alone makes it desirable. Every morning I go to take up brush & twist that old coil round my finger & fix it with hairpins & then

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with a start of joy, no I needn't. In front there is no change: behind I'm like the rump of a partridge. This robs dining out of half its terrors: in token of which, I'm 'dining out' (the distinction is clear: Roger & Clive in Bloomsbury aint dining out) with Ethel & with the Hendersons.

For the rest—its been a gay tropical kind of autumn, with so much Vita & Knole & staying away: we have 'launched' ourselves a little more freely perhaps from work & the Press. But now with Nessa away, Clive away, Dadie away, Vita away, the strenuous time sets in: I'm reading & writing at a great pace: mean to 'do' Morgan; have a fling at my book on fiction; & make all the money we want for Greece & a motor car.

I may note that the first symptoms of Lighthouse are unfavourable. Roger, it is clear did not like Time Passes: Harpers & the Forum have refused serial rights; Brace writes, I think, a good deal less enthusiastically than of Mrs D. But these opinions refer to the rough copy, unrevised. And anyhow I feel callous: L's opinion keeps me steady: I'm neither one thing nor the other. Yesterday Wells asked us to publish a pamphlet for him. This is a great rise in the world for us; & comes on top of rather a flat talk with Angus. L. says he doesn't "manage": Angus refuses to budge an inch. He can't see the point yet. As he says, too, whats he to do if he leaves? He doesn't want to leave—though sometimes 'fed up' he likes it better than most work. But I'm persuaded we need, the press needs, a fanatic at the moment; not this sweet easygoing gentlemanliness. I am annoyed at doing cards & envelopes: & L. does twice the work I do.

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Monday
21st Feb.

Why not invent a new kind of play— as for instance.

Woman thinks: . . .

He does.

Organ Plays.

She writes.

They say:

She sings:

Night speaks:

They miss:

~~Let~~

I think it must be something in this line— though I cant now see what. Away from facts: free; yet concentrated; prose yet poetry; a novel & a play.

But today is

Monday
28th
Feb

& I have got into another stream of thought, if thought it can be called.
Let me collect a few logs, drifting in my mind, to represent the past few days.
Clive, standing at the door.
She cries for ~~[illegible]~~ the moon.
This was said of Mary. With it he went to

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Cassis for 3 months. Again; If Mrs Woolf dont think me worth a penny stamp I said — this being Rose Bartholomew standing at her cottage door on Friday evening. Phrases suddenly seem to me very significant, & then I forget them. My brain is rather stale. Do I like the Lighthouse? I think I was disappointed. But God knows. I have to read it again.

A letter from Vita & Dottie just come. She is not an explicit letter writer. But I must be fond of her, genuinely, to start as I did at the sight of Dotties hand, thinking she wrote to say V. was ill.

For the rest I think Cowper is a good poet. I'd like to write about him. Shall we go to Greece, Italy or France? I'm glad I didn't dedicate my book to Roger. This I verified in his presence, the other night. He dined here with Raymond. Raymond is intellectually speaking underbred. Roger a pure aristocrat. Sheppard came in, his little green eyes glazed bunged up with drink. So to Rodmell. And now the wind is making the tin screen over the gas fire rattle. How we protect ourselves from the Elements! Coming back last night I thought, owing to civilisation ~~I~~ I, who am now cold, wet, & hungry, can be warm & satisfied & listening to a Mozart 4tet in 15 minutes. And so I was.

That ring may be Tom. No. Tom dont ring upstairs — only the lower classes do that.

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Feb. 28th And I don't think I shall go out in the rain, though I am going to spend this week in long romantic London walks. I have successfully broken the neck of that screaming grey goose—society. There's nothing to be afraid of in dining with Ethel or Sibyl—& I'm fledged now. One spins round for a moment & then settles on one's feet. But about the soul: the soul has sunk to the bottom—I am empty headed tonight, feeling the lack of Nessa rather. & all the prelude of spring—the vague discomfort & melancholy & a feeling of having come to anchor. But I intend to work harder & harder. If they—the respectables, my friends, advise me against the Lighthouse, I shall write memoirs; have a plan already to get historical manuscripts & write Lives of the Obscure: but why do I pretend I should take advice? after a holiday the old ideas will come to me as usual; seeming fresher, more important than ever: & I shall be off again, feeling that extraordinary exhilaration, that ardour & lust of creation—which is odd, if what I create is, as it well may be, wholly bad. Today I bought a new watch. Last night I crept into L's bed to make up a sham quarrel about paying our fares to Rodmell. Now to finish Passage to India:

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Sat.
March 5th

Both rather headachy & fatigued. This is the last slope up of the year which is always worst. Finishing, correcting the last proofs that is to say, of a book is always a screw. Then I have written rather inelegantly, one thing after another. A holiday, without dinner to order, or telephone to answer, or people to talk to, will be a divine ~~a~~ miracle. We go to Cassis on the 30th: then to Sicily: so home by Rome. What could be more to my heart. Often I sit & think of looking at things. The greed of my eye is insatiable. To think of seeing a new place fills me with excitement. I now make up pictures of Sicily. think of the Campagna grey in the evening.

I have been hard pressed about the Eliot fund, & behind the scenes of ladies diplomacy — Christie & Sibyl, that is: so much suavity, so much distrust of each other, & ~~&~~ so great a great desire for compliments. Molly came to tea; could not get her mind off her trouble, first laughing at them — Desmond all right, & so on: then brushing laughter aside, & becoming more & more openly worried. Sibyl had cross examined her about her debts. To such indignities poverty exposes one. So I told her the truth, or what I hope will be the truth: that friends are subscribing enough to send them abroad. Oh how wonderful! she exclaimed, she never having seen Italy, & Spain all these years. "I'm afraid Desmond has had rather an unhappy life," she said. "But then think of Lytton..." "Of course I was extravagant about doing the house up... but then we can let it" "Rachel goes for long walks at night & reads Coleridge — Oh Desmond's hopeless — he's like a dog who runs out if the door is open." So we laid our heads together over the fire; & felt very sisterly & sympathetic. I distrust though the pleasure one gets in helping one's friends.

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Monday
March
14th

Although annoyed that I have not heard from Vita by this post nor yet last week, annoyed sentimentally, & partly from vanity — still I must record the conception last night between 12 & one of a new book. I said I would be on the watch for symptoms of this extremely mysterious process. For some weeks, since finishing the Lighthouse I have thought myself virgin, passive, blank of ideas. I toyed vaguely with some thoughts of a flower whose petals fall; of time all telescoped into one lucid channel through wh. my heroine was to pass at will the petals falling. But nothing came yet. I shirked the effort — seemed to have no impulse that way, supposed that I had worked out my vein. Faith Henderson came to tea, &, valiantly beating the waters of conversation, I sketched the possibilities which an unattractive woman, penniless, alone, might yet ~~po~~ bring into being. I began imagining the position — how she would stop a motor on the Dover road, & so get to Dover: cross the channel: &c. It struck me, vaguely, that I might write a Defoe narrative for fun. Suddenly between twelve & one I conceived a whole fantasy to be called "The Jessamy Brides" — why, I wonder? I have rayed round it several scenes. Two women, poor, solitary at the top of a house. One can see anything (for this is all fantasy) the Tower Bridge, clouds, aeroplanes. Also old men listening in the room over the way. Everything is to be tumbled in pall mall. This is to be written as I write letters at the top of my speed: on the ladies of Llangollen; on Mrs. Fladgate; on people passing. No attempt is to be made to realise the ~~po~~ character. Sapphism is to be suggested. Satire is to be the main note — satire & wildness. The Ladies are to have Constantinople

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Orlando
leading
to
The
Waves.
(July 8th
1933)

in view. Dreams of golden domes. My own lyric vein is
to be satirised. Everything mocked. And it is to end
with three dots … so. For the truth is
I feel the need of an escapade after these serious
poetic experimental books whose form is always so
closely considered. I want to kick up my heels & be
off. I want to embody all those innumerable
little ideas & tiny stories which flash into my
mind at all seasons. I think this will be great
fun to write: & it will rest my head before starting
the very serious, mystical poetical work which
I want to come next. Meanwhile, before I can
touch the Jessamy Brides, I have to write my book on fiction &
that wont be done till January, I suppose. I might
dash off a page or two now & then by way of experiment.
And it is possible that the idea will evaporate.
Anyhow this records the odd hurried unexpected way in
which these things suddenly create themselves — one thing
on top of another in about an hour. So I made up
Jacobs Room looking at the fire at Hogarth House;
so I made up to The Lighthouse one afternoon in
the square here.

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Monday
21st March
~~14~~

This is the kind of evening when one seems to be abroad: the window is open: the yellows & greys of the houses seem exposed to the summer: there is that ~~so~~ murmur & clamour which reminds one of Italy. Almost in a week now we shall be starting. I dislike the days before going. I went to buy clothes today & was struck by my own ugliness. Like Edith Sitwell I can never look like other people—too broad, tall, flat, with hair hanging. And now my neck is so ugly... But never think of this at home.

How disturbing the summer is! We shall sit reading with the windows open tonight, but my mind will only just touch the page & float off. Something unsettled & melancholy will be in the air. Also it seems the threshold of that vast booming London summer, which alarms me slightly. Vita & Harold will be back: my book will be out. We shall sit in the Square. But I shall not let things worry me much. (20 days—but this is still only March.) We shall have a week at Cassis—a strange resurrection of us all abroad. Many years have gone since Nessa, Clive & I met there. Never with Leonard of course.

My brain is ferociously active. I want to have at my books as if I were conscious of the lapse of time: age & death. Dear me, ~~to~~ how lovely some parts of the Lighthouse are! Soft & pliable, & I think deep, & never a ~~[illegible]~~ word wrong for a page at a time. This I feel about the dinner party, & the children in the boat: but not of Lily on the lawn. That I do not much like. But I

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like the end.

I get too many letters to answer nowadays. Edith Sitwell came to tea: transparent & like some white bone one picks up on a moor, with sea water stones on her long frail hands which slide into yours much narrower than one expects like a folded fan. She has pale gemlike eyes; & is dressed, on a windy March day, in three decker skirts of red spotted cotton. She half shuts her eyes; coos an odd little laugh, reminding me of the Sickerts. Also very tapering & pointed, the nose running on like a mole. She said I was a great writer, which pleased me. So sensitive to everything in people & books she said. She got talking about her mother, blaspheming in the nursery, hysterical, terrible; setting Edith to kill bluebottles. 'But nobody can take a liberty with her' said Edith, who prides only on Angevin blood. She is a curious product, unstable, tense: sensitive, elevated, affectionate, lonely, having to thread her way (there is something ghostlike & angular about her) home to Bayswater to help cook dinner. She said she would like to attach great bags & balloons of psychology, people having dinner, &c. to her poems, but has no knowledge of human nature, only these sudden intense poems — which by the way she has sent me. In other ages she would have been a cloistered nun; or an eccentric secluded country old maid. It is the oddity of our time that has set her on the music hall stage. She steps out into the limelight with all the timidity & hauteur of the aristocratic spinster.

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Sunday May 1st

We came back on Thursday night from Rome: from that other private life which I mean to have for ever now. There is a complete existence in Italy, apart from this. One is nobody in Italy: one has no name, no calling, no background. And, then, not only is there the beauty, but a different relationship. Altogether I dont think I've ever enjoyed one month so much. What a faculty of enjoyment one has! I liked everything. I wish I were not so ignorant of Italian, art, literature & so on. However, I cannot now write this out, or go into the great mass of feeling which it composed in me. Nelly was found, at 11.30. when we got back, in bed, with some mysterious affection of the kidney. This was a jar; the coffee was a jar; everything was a jar. And then I remember how my book is coming out. People will say I am irreverent—people will say a thousand things. But I think, honestly, I care very little this time—even for the opinion of my friends. I am not sure if it is good. I was disappointed when I read it through the first time. Later I liked it. Anyhow it is the best I can do. But would it be a good thing to read my things when they are printed, critically? This is encouraging that, in spite of obscurity, affectation & so on, my sales rise steadily. We have sold, already, 1220 before publication & I think it will be about 1500. which for a writer like I am is not bad. Yet, to show I am genuine, I find myself thinking of other things with absorption & forgetting that it will be out on Thursday. Leonard never thinks of his book. Vita comes back on Friday. I am angry with her for forgetting to post my letter to Nessa. It is fine, cold, clear, we dine out, have a chair.

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May 5th

Book out. We have sold (I think) 1690 before publication—twice Dalloway. I write however in the shadow of the damp cloud of the ~~Times~~ Times Lit Sup. review, which is an exact copy of the J's R. Mrs Dalloway review. Gentlemanly, kindly, timid: praising beauty, doubting character, & leaving me moderately depressed. I am anxious about Time Passes. Think the whole thing may be pronounced soft, shallow, insipid, sentimental. Yet, honestly, dont much care: want to be let alone to ruminate. Odd how strong this feeling is in me. Now I think we are safe to get our motor car. The next fortnight we shall both be depressed about our books.

Dined with the Wests last night, all odds, things, spread—sprawling; as if they were settling in; wedding presents: clean covers, carpets, &c. all too handsome for my taste. I'm reverting to squalor in my milieu. And then why did she marry him? He is the type of any other cleverish young journalist, common, glib: unlucky last night, but we should talk of Angus. But we talked of Madge.

I know why I am depressed: a bad habit of making up the review I should like before reading the review I get. I am excited about my article on Poetry & Fiction. Writing for an audience always stirs me. I hope to avoid too many jokes. Then Vita will come tomorrow. But I dont want people: I want solitude: Rome.

Nelly away: Pinker away: Clive coming back: Opera in swing: Francis to see me about writing: fine spring weather.

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Wednesday May 11th

Vita back: unchanged, though I daresay ones relations change from day to day. Clive & she together. I think Clive is pretty miserable: his stay at Cassis a failure, so far as writing goes. And then the further reflection, has he not gone too far in eating, drinking, love making, to stop dead now? He seemed random & unsettled, much as when he left, only now with no absolute hand rail to cling to, as he fancied when he went to Cassis. He talked (always shuffling away from himself yet returning, ambiguously, to that centre) about going mad: sometimes thought he was going mad; then how ones life was over, one was spent, played out; this was clear when one saw Julian & Quentin: after all, its an ignominious position to have made the grand refusal, & gone back on it. Mary was at the Opera, on a hot Evening like this think of listening to Wagner, he said. Theres Saxon upstairs; Mary & Sibyl Colefax below. This was all said half curiously, yet doubtfully: as if not knowing what line to take.

My book. What is the use of saying one is indifferent to reviews when positive praise, though mingled with blame, gives one such a start on, that instead of feeling used up, one feels, on the contrary, flooded with ideas? I gather from vague hints, through Margery Joad, through Clive, that some people say its my best book. So far Vita praises: Dotty enthuses: an unknown donkey writes. No one has yet read it to the end, I daresay: & I shall hover about, not anxious but worried for 2 more weeks, when it will be over.

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Monday May 16th — The book. Now on its feet so far as praise is concerned — It has been out 10 days — Thursday a week ago. Nessa enthusiastic — a sublime, almost upsetting outbreak. She says it is an amazing portrait of mother: a supreme portrait painter: has lived in it: found the rising of the dead almost painful. Then Ottoline. Then Vita, then Charlie, then Lord Olivier, then Tommie, then Clive: poor Clive — he came in, ostentatiously to praise this 'amazing book — far the best you've ever written' but found Eddie, who imposed himself resolutely, sharply; & so sat on, but how wandering & unhappily. I have scarcely seen him in this mood ever before. Like a person awaked from a sweet dream. But what is it? A disillusionment? A shock? Has the He sees Mary. Has he lost faith? Has the dancing mist of rhapsody failed him — he who was based so solidly on such beef & beer or champagne rather. Suppose one woke & found merely a fraud? It was part of my madness — that horror. But then as Clive said, you go mad but you bound up again — the inference being that he was to stay mad. Sold 1802 of the L: if it makes 3,000 I shall be more than content. Mervyn dead — on May day — did I record; & I haunted for a time by the sight of his prim pinched face, with the nice blue eyes, so suddenly stilled: so unseasonably. The eye plays a large part in these affairs.

This it did on July 13th

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Monday June 6th (Whitmonday)

2,200

I have been in bed a week with a sudden & very sharp headache, & this is written experimentally to test my brain. It is a horrid dull damp Bank holiday morning—(Clive L. comes in & we spend fifteen minutes discussing advertisement. The L. has sold 2.200. & we are reprinting) Nessa says its ugly weather when I ring up to offer her half a bottle of turpentine to paint her cupboard with.

But I would like to learn to write a steady plain narrative style. Then perhaps I could catch up with the last few weeks; describe my visit to Oxford; & how I lunched with Clive & dined with Eddie & stood in the basement printing Goldstalk with a great sense of shade & shelter. I like the obscure anonymity of the Press better a good deal than I like Voltaire by Riding. And now, with Morgan's morganatic, evasive, elusive letter this morning, the Lighthouse is behind me: my headache over; & after a week at Rodmell, my freedom from inspection, my deep dive into my own mind will begin.

How odd, becomes into my mind, is Nessa & my jealousy of each others clothes! I feel her, when I put on my smart black fringed cape, anguished for a second: did I get it from Champclo? In the same way I run my eye over her Paris dress, & compare it with my last year's Brooke. Then she says she is going to wear ear rings: I say at once that I will: this she resents. Yet we are both fundamentally humble, & soon recover from our umbrage.

I think, however, I am now almost an established figure—as a writer. They dont laugh at me any longer. Soon they will take me for granted. Possibly I shall be a

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celebrated writer — Anyhow, the Lighthouse is much more nearly a success, in the usual sense of the word, than any other book of mine. A great knot of people came together suddenly last week, or the week before. Tom — so glad to gossip with me offhandedly over a cup — no 6 cups — of tea; then he played the gramophone: & Logan, pink & spruce, doing his trick of culture & urbanity & good sense very efficiently. He had been evoking the spirit of Henry James with Desmond in Paris (Sibyl, by the way, takes to herself all credit for that fund, I observe; Sibyl, Clive & Raymond say, has sold her soul to the devil, & he's now come to fetch it — this phrase is common to them both, & gives the measure of smart talk at lunch parties.) Lytton, too, I saw. an invalid after an attack of love, the most desperate since Duncan. We talked, with more marble eyed Cynthia Noble attentive as far as she can be, about the O'B. & his life. I then glide into intimacy with Lytton about books. He is enthusiastic, his mind bare, his attention extremely alive, about books; whereas, about love, its more cryptic. Dadie & Douglas were both starched & powdered like pasteboard young men at a ballet: legs quite straight; heads curled; shirts granulated; They were going on to Kitchin's party, to be bored, as they knew; but in perfect trim for it. This Lytton does not quite achieve. We dined ostentatiously rather, it being part of the game to order food from Fortnum — Masons. part of the pathetic, rather attractive, yet also foolish, showing off, very youthful game of being precisely like other people.

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Saturday June 18th

This is a terribly thin diary for some reason: half the year has been spent, & left only these few sheets. Perhaps I have been writing too hard in the morning to write here also. Three weeks wiped out by headache. We had a week at Rodmell, of which I remember various sights, suddenly unfolding before me spontaneously (for example, the village standing out to sea in the June night, houses seeming ships: the marsh a fiery foam) & the immense comfort of lying there lapped in peace. I lay out all day in the new garden, with the terrace. It is already being made. There were blue tits nested in the hollow neck of my Venus. Vita came over one very hot afternoon, & we walked to the river with her. Pinker now swims after Leonards stick. I read—any trash. Maurice Baring: sporting memoirs. Slowly ideas began trickling in; & then suddenly I rhapsodised (the night L. dined with the apostles) & told over the story of the Moths, which I think I will write very quickly, perhaps in between chapters of that long impending book on fiction. Now the Moths will I think fill out the skeleton which I dashed in here: the play-poem idea: the idea of some continuous stream, not solely of human thought, but of the ship, the night &c, all flowing together: intersected by the arrival of the bright moths. A man & a woman are to be sitting at table talking. Or shall they remain silent? It is to be ~~about~~ a love story: she is finally to let the last great moth in. The contrasts might be

the waves

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something of this sort: she might talk, or think, about the age of the earth: the death of humanity: then the moths keep on coming. Perhaps the man could be left absolutely dim. France: near the sea: at night: a garden under the window. But it needs ripening. I do a little work on it in the evening when the gramophone is playing late Beethoven sonatas. (the windows fidget at their fastenings as if we were at sea)

We have been to Hyde Park, where the Church boys were marching: officers on horses in their cloaks like Equestrian statues. Always this kind of scene gives me the notion of human beings playing a game, ghastly; I suppose, to their own satisfaction.

We saw Vita given the Hawthornden. A horrid show up, I thought: not of the gentry on the platform — Squire, Drinkwater, Binyon only — of us all: all of us chattering writers. My word! how insignificant we all looked! How can we pretend that we are interesting, that our works matter? The whole business of writing became infinitely distasteful. There was no one I could care whether he read, liked, or disliked "my writing". And no one could care for my criticism either: the mildness, the sentimentality of them all struck me. But there may be a stream of ink in them that matters more than the look of them — so tightly clothed, mild, & decorous — showed. I felt there was no one full grown mind among us. In truth, it was the thick dull middle class of letters that met: not the aristocracy. Vita cried at night

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Wednesday June 22nd

Woman haters depress me, & both Tolstoi & Mrs Asquith hate women. I suppose my ~~hatred~~ depression is a form of vanity. But then so are all strong opinions on both sides. I hate Mrs A's hard, dogmatic empty style. But enough: I shall write about her tomorrow. I write every day about something, & have deliberately set apart a few weeks to money making, so that I may put £50 in each of our pockets by September. This will be the first money of my own since I married. I never felt the need of it till lately. And I can get it, if I want it, but shirk writing for money.

Clive's father died yesterday. Harold Nicolson & Duncan dined with us, & Nessa came in afterwards, very silent, inscrutable &, perhaps critical. As a family we distrust anyone outside our set, I think. We too definitely decide that so & so has not the necessary virtues. I daresay Harold has not got them: at the same time, there is a good deal in him I like: he is quick & rash & impulsive: not in our sense, very clever, uneasy, seeming young; on the turn from diplomat to intellectual; not Vita's match; but honest & cordial. L. says he's too commonplace. I liked my little duet with him. He wears a green, or blue, shirt & tie; is pendant; chubby; smart; vivacious. Talked of politics, but was flimsy compared with Leonard—I thought. Said twice with L. & me that he felt completely at his ease. Told stories all round rather easily in the bare Bloomsbury rooms.

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Thursday
June
23rd.

This diary shall batten on the leanness of my social life. Never have I spent so quiet a London summer. It is perfectly easy to slip out of the crush unobserved. I have set up my standard as an invalid, & no one bothers me. No one asks me to do anything. Vainly, I have the feeling that this is my choice, not theirs; & there is a luxury in being quiet in the heart of chaos. Directly I talk & spent my wits in talk I get a dull damp rather headachy day. Quiet brings me cool clear quick mornings, in which I dispose of a good deal of work, & toss my brain into the air when I take a walk. I shall feel some triumph if I skirt a headache this summer.

I sat with Nessa in the Square yesterday. Angelica sends Pinker after a ball. Nessa & I sit on the seat & gossip. She is to see Mary; she is to go to old Bell's funeral. She is learning to motor. She has sold a picture. The point of this affair is that Mary is in love with another. This point was carefully hidden before Easter. Her vanity was careful to hide it: her discretion. So I got my version out of proportion. The truth is odd enough though. Unless she will bed with him he is distracted. That she will not do; yet, for lack of him; is distracted herself. The love affair rather increases on her side. It is said to be for someone low in the world. This inclines us to think it Lord Ivor. But the point is one for curiosity only.

Vita's book verberates & reverberates in the Press. A prize poem — that's my fling at it — for with some relics of jealousy, or it may be of critical sense; I can't quite take the talk of poetry & even great poetry seriously

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But the subject & the manner, so smooth, so mild, may be what I dislike: & perhaps I am corrupt. I wonder what I should think if I could get a cool look at some writing of my own. Oh & Sibyl has dropped me: & I dont feel the fall. What is then the abiding truth in this phantasmagoria, I ask myself, seeking as I often do, some little nugget of pure gold. I think, often, I have the happiest of lives, in having discovered stability. Now one stable moment suspends chaos. But this I said in the Lighthouse. We have now sold, I think, 2555 copies:

I am sickened by my failure to make cigarettes. I had a lesson from a man in Francis Street — cant do a thing with my fingers. Angelica is expert with hers already. Nessa says all painters are: this is a perquisite they get thrown in with their gift.

And Adrian came to tea on Sunday, & fairly sparkled. At last I think he has emerged. Even his analysis will be over this year. At the age of 43 he will be educated & ready to start life. I remember Harry Stephen saying that he had his fingers on the gear — the Indian Judgeship that is to say — about then. So we Stephens mature late. And our late flowers are rare & splendid. Think of my books, Nessa's pictures — it takes us an age to bring our faculties into play. And now I must write to Ethel Sands, & perhaps, go to the Ballet.

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Thursday June 30th

Now I must sketch out the Eclipse.

About 10 on Tuesday night several very long trains, accurately filled (ours with civil servants) left King's Cross. In our carriage was Vita & Harold Quentin. L. & I. This is Hatfield I daresay. I said I was smoking a cigar. Then again, This is ~~Grantha~~ Peterborough. L. said. Before it got dark we kept looking at the sky: soft fleecy; but there was one star, over Alexandra Park. Look Vita, thats Alexandra Park, said Harold. The Nicolsons got sleepy: H. curled up with his head on V's knee. She looked like Sappho by Leighton, asleep: So we plunged through the midlands; made a very long stay at York. Then at 3 we got out our sandwiches. & I came in from the W.C. to find Harold being rubbed clean of cream. Then he broke the china sandwich box. Here L. laughed without restraint. Then we had another doze, or the N's did; then here was a level crossing, at which were drawn up a long line of motor omnibuses & motors, all burning pale yellow lights. It was getting grey - still a fleecy mottled sky. We got to Richmond about 3.30: it was cold, & the N's had a quarrel, Eddie said, about V's luggage. We went off in the omnibus, saw a vast castle (who does that belong to said Vita, who is interested in Castles) It had a front window added, & a light I think burning. All the fields were aburn with June grasses & red tasselled plants none coloured as yet, all pale. Pale & grey too were the little uncompromising Yorkshire farms. As we passed one, the farmer, & his wife & sister

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came out, all tightly & tidily dressed in black, as if they were going to church. At another ugly square farm, two women were looking out of the upper windows. These had white blinds drawn down half across them. We were a train of 3 vast cars, one stopping to let the others go on; all very low & powerful; taking immensely steep hills. The driver once got out & put a small stone behind our wheel – inadequate – An accident would have been natural. There were also many motor cars. These suddenly increased as we crept up to the top of Barden Fell. Here were people camping beside their cars. We got out, & found ourselves very high, on a moor, boggy, heathery, with butts for grouse shooting. There were grass tracks here & there, & people had already taken up positions. So we joined them, walking out to what seemed the highest point looking over Richmond. One light burnt down there. Vales & moors stretched, slope after slope, round us. It was like the Haworth country. But over Richmond, where the sun was rising, was a soft grey cloud. We could see by a gold spot where the sun was. But it was early yet. We had to wait, stamping to keep warm. Ray had wrapped herself in the blue striped blanket off a double bed. She looked incredibly vast & bedroomish. Saxon looked very old. Leonard kept looking at his watch. Four great red setters came leaping over the moor. There were sheep feeding behind us. Vita had tried to buy a guinea pig – Quentin advised a savage – so she observed the animals from time to time. There were thin places in the cloud, & some complete holes. The question was whether the sun

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would shine ~~either~~ through a cloud or through one of these hollow places when the time came. We began to get anxious. We saw rays coming through the bottom of the clouds. Then, for a moment we saw the sun, sweeping — it seemed to be sailing at a great pace & clear in a gap; we had out our smoked glasses; we saw it crescent, burning red; next moment it had sailed fast into the cloud again; only the red streamers came from it; then only a golden haze, such as one has often seen. The moments were passing. We thought we were cheated; we looked at the sheep: they showed no fear; the setters were racing round; everyone was standing in long lines, rather dignified, looking out. I thought how we were like very old people, in the birth of the world — druids on Stonehenge: (this idea came more vividly in the first pale light though;) At the back of us were great blue spaces in the cloud. These were still blue. But now the colour was going out. The clouds were turning pale; a reddish black colour. Down in the valley it was an extraordinary scrumble of red & black: there was the one light burning; all was cloud down there. ~~Then out~~ & very beautiful, so delicately tinted. Nothing could be seen through the cloud. The 24 seconds were passing. Then one looked back again at the blue: & rapidly, very very quickly, all the colours faded: it became darker & darker as at the beginning of a violent storm; the light sank & sank: we kept saying this is the shadow; & we thought now it is over — this is the shadow when suddenly the light went out. We had fallen. It was extinct. There was no colour. The earth was dead. That was the astonishing moment: & the next when as if a ball had rebounded, the cloud took colour on itself again, only a sparky ethereal colour

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& so the light came back. I had very strongly the feeling as the light went out of some vast obeisance: something kneeling down, & suddenly raised up, when the colours came. They came back astonishingly lightly & quickly & beautifully in the valley & over the hills – at first with a miraculous glittering & aetheriality, later normally almost, but with a great sense of relief. It was like recovery. We had been much worse than we had expected. We had seen the world dead. This was within the power of nature. Our greatness had been apparent too. Now we became Ray in a blanket, Saxon in a cap &c. We were bitterly cold. I should say that the cold had increased as the light went down. ~~It w~~ One felt very livid. Then – it was over till 1999. What remained was the ~~comfort & l~~ a sense of the comfort which we get used to, of plenty of light & colour: this for some time seemed a definitely welcome thing. Yet when it became established all over the country, one rather missed the sense of its being a relief & a respite, which one had had when it came back after the darkness. How can I express the darkness? It was a sudden plunge, when one did not expect it: being at the mercy of the sky: our own nobility: the Druids: Stonehenge: & the racing red dogs: all that was in ones mind. Also, to be picked out of a London drawing room & set down on the wildest moors in England was impressive. For the rest, I remember trying to keep awake in the gardens ~~at~~ York while Eddy talked & falling asleep. Asleep again in the train. It was hot & we were merry. The carriage was full of things. Harold was very kind & attentive. Eddy was peevish. Roast beef & pineapple chunks, he said. We got home at 8.30 perhaps.

The colours for some moments were of the most lovely kind – fresh, various – here blue, & there brown: all new colours, as if washed over & re-painted.

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4th July. Back from Long Barn. Thank heaven, I never had to change my dress. Such opulence & freedom, flowers all out, butler, silver, dogs, biscuits, wine, hot water, log fires, Italian cabinets, Persian rugs, books — this was the impression it made: as of stepping into a rolling gay sea, with nicely crested waves: as if the austere worn life had suddenly been set on springs, — went bounding, springing for the week end. Yet I like this room better perhaps: more effort & life in it, to my mind, unless this is the prejudice one has naturally in favour of the display of one's own character. Vita very opulent, in her brown velvet coat with the baggy pockets, pearl necklace, & slightly furred cheeks. (They are like Sarcenet flannel, of which she picked me a great bunch) in texture) Of its kind this is the best, most representative human life I know: I mean, certain gifts & qualities & good fortunes are here miraculously combined — I liked Harold too. He is a spontaneous childlike man, of no great boring power; has a mind that bounces when he drops it: he opens his eyes as he looks at one; has a little immature moustache; curled hair; an air of immaturity which is welcome. I should judge him very generous & kind hearted; an Englishman overlaid with culture; coming of exuberant country stock; & not much fined even by diplomacy. After dinner last night we discussed the Empire: "I prefer Sydney to Paris. Australia is more important than France. After all, its our younger sons out there. I feel proud of it. The point is, Raymond, our English genius is for government." "The governed dont seem to enjoy it" said Raymond. Silly ass, said Harold. We do our job: disinterestedly: we dont think of

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ourselves, as the French do, or the Germans do. Take the Belgian oil fields. There's a hospital there where ~~all the~~ they take any one, employé or not. The natives come from all over the place. Don't tell me that's not a good thing. And they trust us." So on to the system of bribery: to the great age of England being the age of colonial expansion. "I grant Shakespeare's a nasty snag". "But why not grow, change?" I said. Also, I said, recalling the aeroplanes that had flown over us, while the portable wireless played dance music on the terrace, can't you see that nationality is over? All divisions are now rubbed out, or about to be." Raymond vehemently assented. Raymond is all for the triumph of mind. What action matters? Action matters most of all, said Harold. I was sitting on a carved Italian stool over the log fire; he — Raymond bedded in the soft green sofa. Leonard injustice to the aristocracy was discussed. . Before then, Lord Sackville & Mrs Rubens had come over, partly to protest their respectability, partly to play tennis. (They won't stay at Knole alone if possible; & if they must, sanctify the proceedings by calling in Vita) He is a smooth worn man, inheriting noble nose & chin which he has not put much into himself; a straight, young looking man, save that his face has the lack lustre of a weak man whose life has proved too much for him. No longer does he struggle much for happiness, I imagine: accepts resignedly; & goes to Maidstone almost daily, as part of the routine of his nobility. He plays golf; he plays tennis He thinks Bernard Darwin

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must be a man of surpassing brain power. We sat together under a vast Goat Skin Coat of Vita's, watching them play, & I found him smooth & ambling as a blood horse, but obliterated, obscure, with his great Sackville eyes drooping, & his face all clouded with red & brown. One figured a screw or other tool whose worms & edges have been rubbed smooth, so that though they shine, plaid silver, they no longer grip:

Vita very free & easy, always giving me great pleasure to watch, & recalling some image of a ship breasting a sea, nobly, magnificently, with all sails spread, & the gold sunlight on ~~her~~ them. As for her poetry, or intelligence, save when canalised in the traditional channel, I ~~know~~ can say nothing very certain. She never breaks fresh ground. She picks up what the tide rolls to her feet. For example, she follows, with simple instinct, all the inherited tradition of gardening, so that her home is gracious, glowing, stately, but without novelty or adventure. So with her poetry, I dare say. Raymond & I travelled up & discussed them. She the most noble character he said; both almost shamefully fortunate, so that Harold touches wood when he reflects on his own life, heaves a sigh & says how, if it were dashed down tomorrow, he would have had his day. But it wont be dashed down at all. It will grow fuller & fuller round them both; their fruit will ripen, & their leaves golden; & the night will be indigo blue, with a soft gold moon. They lack only what we have — some cutting edge; some invaluable idiosyncrasy intensity, for which I would not have all the suns & all the moons in the world

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July 10th Waiting for what I do not exactly know. In a mood of random restlessness—Nelly having for the 125th time 'given notice' this morning. Shall I go to Ashley Gardens & engage Mrs Collins & her daughter? I am sick of the timid spiteful servant mind; yet perhaps Mrs Collins will be of the same feather. Never mind. A great storm has torn off one wing of my double windows. But I have never mentioned the absorbing subject—the subject which has filled our thoughts to the exclusion of Clive & Mary & literature & death & life—motor cars. Every evening we go round with Pinker for a game in Gordon Sqre.—I talk as if the evenings had been fine—no, we sit there in between the sulphur coloured storms; under the shelter of trees with the rain pattering between the leaves. We talk of nothing but cars. Then, sometimes, word is brought that Mrs Bell is at the door in her car. I rush out, & find her, rather nervously in control of a growing shabby Renault with Fred beside her. Three times I have been for a little tour with her. And yesterday we commissioned Fred to find us & bring instantly to our door, a Singer. We have decided on a Singer. And, the reason why I am distracted now is that Fred is going to ring me up & say if I am to have my first lesson this evening. The sun is shining; the trees dripping. Possibly I may go. This is a great opening up in our lives. One may go to Bodiam, to Arundel, explore the Chichester downs. ~~ex~~ Expand that curious thing, the map of the world in ones mind. It will I think diminish loneliness, & may of course imperil complete privacy. The Keynes' have one too—a ~~che~~ cheap one.

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Nessa thinks it will break down at once. Nessa takes a very
sinister view of the Keyneses. She anticipates ruin of every
sort for them, with some pleasure too. There's Leonard—
So then I tell him about the storm, about the telephones, &
about Pinker. Then Sibyl who has cut me these 3
months, suddenly writes to say she has been 'unwell',
or & will I come to tea. So I went. And now I must
ghastly dress for Clive's party, where I am to meet Cory &
Nessa & Duncan & Christabel: for there's a plethora of
parties this week, & tomorrow I'm missing Lydia &
Stravinsky; but a kind of philosophy protects me: I shall
make out a happy evening somehow; & find a curious
pleasure in staying away, imagining: So I must stop. reach
write to Sibyl. With any luck the Lighthouse will ~~still~~
3,000 this week.

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Saturday July 23rd.

This is very near the end of the London Season. I go to Ethels at Dieppe (I'm rather proud of crossing the Channel again) on Wednesday, then back to Newhaven, where I may be met by my own car. Since making the last entry I have learnt enough to drive a car in the country alone. On backs of paper I write down instructions for starting cars. We have a nice light little shut-up car in which we can travel thousands of miles. Its very dark blue, with a paler line round it. The would give me this for writing the Lighthouse, I reflect, a book which has now sold 3,180 (perhaps) copies: will sell 3,500 before it dies; & thus far exceeds any other of mine. The night I did not go to Stravinsky Dermod came. tender & garrulous & confidential. I remember leaning with him out of the window. He was full of love for Everyone. He said he loved the way Melinda scratched her head or put on her gloves. He said he was now in love with his children. When Dermod asks him for a new perspective for his microscope he feels what he used to feel when he was in love with a woman. He resents his gift of money a little. Since he was making £2,000 a year; but then he had 'arrears'; & has now, evidently — £200 to the Bank, £200 to the for income tax & so on. We talked of love owing to Clive. For that night after I dined with Clive & went through some rather artificial gambols with Christa (who has always thought of me as Virginia; & cant quite lose the sense of my being a perfect lady. "Look at those hands") Clive walked me ~~up~~ round, & standing under the lamp expressed his complete disillusion. "My dear Virginia, life is over. Theres no good denying it. We're 45. I know I'm bored, I'm bored, I'm unutterably bored.

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my own reactions; I know what I'm going to say. I'm not interested in a thing. Pictures bore me. I take up a book & put it down. No one's interested in what I think any more. I go about thinking about suicide. I admire you for having tried to kill yourself." To think that I should be listening to this in the moonlight from Clive! And he spoke with such dreary good sense too. I could scarcely whip up any ardour of denial. It was all true, it seemed to me. Not, indeed, true of me, but true of him. & so I feebly asked him to come & see me; & I would prove that I was interested in him. He agreed half heartedly, waved his hand, & went off, thinking about suicide. Then we met next night at Raymonds. Hardly had I come into the room but he started up boasting & professing, perfunctorily at a little, but boldly enough. He had had an adventure. Life was changed. had met the loveliest of women, seemed the nicest too, was an aristocrat; she had been kind to him; would Raymond come on to supper on Monday? All this was blustered out with many a cuff at me (for he always wishes he says to hurt me – even over a motor car) & it was about Valerie Taylor, an actress, whom he had met lunching at the Maclagans. For my own part, I am once more at the stage of thinking Clive 'scandalous'! This all so silly, shallow, & selfish. Granted the charm of his vitality, still one would prefer a finer taste to it. How angry his 'scandalousness' used to make me in connection with Nessa: now I think of it much less often, but I suppose the feeling is there. All this summer he has twanged so persistently on the one string that one gets bored. Love love love – Clive, Clive. Clive – that's the

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time off, thrummed with rather callous persistency a thick finger & thumb. Her love I dare say nothing against; but it is a feeble passion, I mean a gross dull passion, when it has no part in it of imagination, intellect, poetry. Clive's love is three parts vanity. Now that he can say, or lie, "I've been to bed with Valerie," his self love is assuaged. It regains Clive the undaunted lover, the Don Juan of Bloomsbury; & whether its true or not, so long as we think it true, scarcely matters. But I own that he pesters me with his jealousy, or whatever it is; does his best to annoy me, & so I'm not quite the impartial judge I might be. The interesting question remains — why does he always wish to hurt me? So Desmond & I discussed all this. And the Lighthouse too; & I felt, susceptible as I am, he's doing this partly to thank me for having been generous to him. But I am enough mistress of myself now to let these feelings flow & not disturb my pleasure. All images are now tinged with driving a motor. Here I think of letting my engine work, with my clutch out. It has been, on the whole, a fresh well ordered summer. I am not so parched with talk as usual. I have dipped into society more easily. My illness in May was a good thing in some ways; for I got control of society at an early stage, & circumvented my headache, without a complete smash. Thus it has been a free quiet summer: I enjoyed the Eclipse: I enjoyed Long Barn: (where I went twice) I enjoyed sitting with Vita at Kew for 3 or 4 hours under a cloudy sky, & dining at the Petit Riche with her: she refreshes me, & solaces me: I have worked very methodically & done my due of articles, so that with luck, I shall have made £120 over my proper sum by September. That is I shall have made

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£320 by journalism, & I suppose at least £300 by my novel
this year. I have thought too much, though on purpose, with my
eyes open, of making money; & once we have each a nest egg
I should like to let that sink into my sub-consciousness, & earn
easily what we need. Bruce Richmond is coming to tea on
Monday to discuss an article on Morgan. & I am going to
convey to him the fact that I can't always refuse £60 in
America for the Times' £10. If I could make easily £350
a year, I would: if I could get some settled job.
At Rodmell I am going, seriously, to begin my book on
fiction. With luck I might have this done by January.
Then I shall have the Moths full in my brain to pour out.
I am keeping it standing a long time, & rather fear that it
may lose its freshness. Dadie has involved us (is the
word wrong?) with Peter. Dadie dines with Topsy &
she pumps him about the Wolves & Peter's book. Dadie
wants to crab it & puts it on to us. Leonard says it
doesn't do: Virginia thinks it 'Academic'. The result is
a long angry letter from Peter, half vanity, half righteous
indignation; but we have explained, & all the burden now
rests on Dadie. (& partly on me, for Topsy says I wrote her a rude letter
about Jane Austen, but this has been explained)
The Press is going on. Novels are the great bloodsuckers. Mary's
book will cost us £100; & we shall lose two on the Marionettes.
So in the past two days I have rejected Butts & Waglith &
Littell; I fancy that we dont do as well as we should
with novels. And I'm exposed to the hanging lips &
clamorous vanity of Lucy Clifford today: she has an
article on George Eliot which she wrote for a special fee
(that is whom I shall end if I dont take care — talking always
of 'fees') for the Nineteenth Century. Gottstalk is finished.

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Monday 5th August

Rodmell.

I was to have written here such a brilliant account of my 3 days at Dieppe. It was to have sprung, suddenly, in a beautiful fountain, out of the table in the window at (name forgotten) overlooking the Seine. The Seine there is very broad, & round the bend come constantly steamers, Norwegian, with petrol, English, French; & Nan kept looking to read their names, showing in all she did a sort of nervous tremulous pride in France (or do I imagine this?) which hints at the fact that she likes their life there, alone at Auppegard, better than Ethel. "I'm gregarious" said Ethel a little waspishly, for she is bubble & acid, the spoilt pet of the more dour & upstanding Nan. We were, I think, looking over the cliff with the churchyard on it, the tombstones standing up against the blue sea. But I was to have written this, & now shall not, I suppose.— Its a very narrow house, all window, laid with pale bright Samarkand rugs, & painted greens & blues, with lovely 'pieces', & great ~~bunches~~ pots of carefully designed flowers ~~pieces~~. A white bull terrier stalks from room to room, one ear bent over in his fights. Nan, stylishly dressed, sews dusters of an evening, & Ethel craves talk. Nessa & Duncan say that the talk skirts & flits & never settles very long; in fact that the house is built upon the finest silver wood ash: so soft so silver you dont at first notice how it gets into your throat & makes your skin dry & dusty.

arranged by Roomas.

We have motored most days. We opened one little window when we bought the gramophone; now another opens with the motor — I was going to say, but stopped.

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Wednesday Aug. 9th

Yes, the motor is turning out the joy of our lives, an additional life, free & mobile & airy to live alongside our usual ~~that~~ stationary industry. We spin off to Falmer, ride over the Downs, drop in to Rottingdean, then sweep over to Seaford, call, in pouring rain at Charleston, pass the time of day with Clive — Nessa is at Bodiam — return for tea, all as light & easy as a hawk in the air. Soon we shall look back at our pre-motor days as we do now at our days in the caves. After a week here, Leonard has become perfectly efficient; I am held back by insufficient lessons, but shall be expert before September is half through. Various little improvements in the house keeps me on the thrill with hope & despair. Shall I lavish £5 that will be mine on a new spare bed? — alas, I fear I must: then the great &

doubtful operations of furnishing will be over, & next year I shall add ornament & comfort. Perhaps if I make an extra sum we might build a bed sitting room for me in the attic, enlarge L's study, & so have a desirable, roomy, light house. For if we had £300 every year to spend, it is difficult to think of anything, except this, to spend it on. Here at the age of 45 are Nessa & I growing little wings again after our hard, & pocket money, lean years. She may rake in another £500; perhaps more. Already she has bought a roll of linoleum & a Cupboard. But my state is precarious. With the Lighthouse I may just have climbed to the top of my hill; or again we may wobble back; my journalism may fall off with the Americans: no rich father in law will endow me; but Heaven knows, I have not much anxiety. We are flexible, adventurous still I hope. An odd incident,

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psychologically as the vanished Kot used to say, has been Morgan's serious concern about my article on him. Did I care a straw what he said about me? Was it more laudatory? Yet here is this self-possessed, aloof man taking every word to heart, cast down to the depths, apparently, because I do not give him superlative rank, & writing again & again to ask about it, or suggest about it, anxious that it shall be published in England, & also that more space shall be given to the Passage to India. Had I been asked, I should have said that of all writers he would be the most indifferent & cool under criticism. And he minds a dozen times more than I do, who have the opposite reputation.

This brings me back to those last days in London when I called on Ottoline, had a shabby cosy intimate talk with her, & then, inadvertently as if by touching a button brought on me the whole shower bath of Philip's affection. It came the next day, inconveniently, & the day after when Sybil was there. Once more I felt the uneasy excitement of 'love'; that is of physical desire making someone restless, too restless & emotional to talk simply. But L. came in; Pinker came in, & the amorous Philip, who has lost most of his good looks & is coarse as an old ram, had to leave. But I found a letter at Rodmell, quoting J's Room — 'Come back to me Darling' — with which I shall make Vita jealous tomorrow. But what course to take especially now that he is our neighbour, I do not altogether know; nor whether to answer his letter or not.

This, however, is Nelly's first evening back, in the flush of good temper, with Gladys, & I am beginning to think of my dinner. Since I dined at Cuckfield I cannot be said to have dined at all: ham & eggs; cheese & raspberries; once a baked pudding — so we have fed at the hands of poor emaciated Mrs Bartholomew.

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Aug 21st

Some little scenes I meant to write down.

One was on the flats towards Lewes on a blazing hot day. We stopped in a large road about 3 in the afternoon, & heard hymn singing. It was very lonely & desolate. Here were people singing to themselves. in the hot afternoon. I looked & saw a middle class 'lady' in skirt & coat & ribboned hat, by the cottage door. She was making the daughters of the agricultural labourers sing: it was about three o'clock on a Tuesday perhaps. Later we passed the ladies, home: it had a wooden griffin nailed above the door — presumably her crest.

What I like, or one of the things I like, about motoring is the sense it gives one of lighting accidentally, like a voyager who touches another planet with the tip of his toe, upon scenes which would have gone on, have always gone on, will go on, unrecorded, save for this chance glimpse. Then it seems to me I am allowed to see the heart of the world uncovered for a moment. It strikes me that this hymn singing in the flats went on precisely so in Cromwell's time.

That was our only hot day, I think. One day the rain splashed down so fast that it rose again in — fountains, up off the road in our faces.

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Sunday 4th Sept. Many scenes have come & gone unwritten, since it is today the 4th Sept. a cold grey blowy day, made memorable by the sight of a kingfisher, & by my sense, waking early, of being again visited by 'the spirit of delight.' "Rarely, rarely comest thou, spirit of delight." That was I singing this time last year; & sang so poignantly that I have never forgotten it, or my vision of a fin rising on a wide blank sea. No biographer could possibly guess this important fact about my life in the late summer of 1926: yet biographers pretend they know people.

A happy summer, this? Well, a stirring working splashing social summer. Many meetings: & one or two parties. I amuse myself by watching my mind shape scenes. We sat in a field strewn with cut grass at Michelham Priory the other day. It was roasting hot — there was Angus with his pink shirt open; Duncan strolling along with a sketch book under his arm; the sound of rushing water; Nessa driving her old blue bonnet with Angelica perched beside her. Nothing much is said on these occasions; but the memory remains: made of what? Of coloured shirts: the pink roof of the Gateway against a grey blue sky: & Parker: & my being cross about my book on fiction; & Leonard silent; & a great quarrel that hot night: & I coming up here to sit alone in the dark, & L. following me; & sharp hard words: right & wrong on both sides: peace making: sleep. Content.

A Graveyard Scene.

Mr. Malthouse's son, a sailor, died of consumption & was buried in the churchyard under the big tree. I went

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into the churchyard with Angelica that ~~[illegible]~~ fine afternoon. ~~At~~ Avery was digging the grave, throwing up heavy showers of the yellow earth. Mrs Avery, immensely fat & florid, was sprawling on the edge of the grave, with her small children ~~[illegible]~~ playing about. They were having tea, & dressed in their reds & blue looked more like a picture by Millais, or some other Victorian, of life — death, youth & the grave, than any real sight. It was quite unconscious; yet the most deliberate picture making; hence unreal, sentimental, overdone.

The flying Princess, I forget her name, has been drowned in her purple leather breeches. I suppose so at least. Their petrol gave out about midnight on Thursday when the aeroplane must have come gently down upon the long slow Atlantic waves. I suppose they burnt a light which showed streaky on the water for a time. There they rested a moment or two. The pilot, I think, looked back at the broad cheeked desperate eyed vulgar princess in her purple breeches & I suppose made some desperate dry statement — how the game was up: sorry: fortune against them: & she just glared; & then a wave broke over the wing: & the machine tipped. And she said something theatrical & daring: nobody was sincere; all acted a part; nobody shrieked: luck against us — something of that kind, they said, & then so long, & first one man was washed off & went under; & then a great wave came & the Princess threw up her arms & went down; & the third man sat saved — for a second looking at the rolling waves, so patient, so unplacable & the moon grandly regarding; & then with a dry snorting sound he too was tumbled off & rolled over, & the aeroplane rocked & rolled — miles from anywhere, off Newfoundland, while I slept at Rodmell, & Leonard was dining with the Craniums in London.

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5th Sept.

Having solidified the ~~story~~ vision of the Flying Princess into words, I have, & strangely enough, laid a phantom which has been very prominent before my eyes. Why should this be so? Some dematerialisation— Seems solely laid to rest. ~~But~~ So, gradually, the urgency of the memory dies out too, as in one's own life: in about 48 or 96 hours all trace of the death of the Princess in her purple breeches is smoothed over.

As a matter of fact, we are just in from Brighton, & my mind is agitated by having bought a jersey, which I like; & by having let Leonard bump the back of the car on the gate post. So, to soothe these whirlpools, I write here. We went to Brighton today, & thus added a pounds worth of pleasure to life. Monotony is avoided. Oh, & I thought — but the thought is already escaping — about the enormous activity of the human kind; this feverish runnings about; Brighton & the roads being nothing but a swarm & agitation of human flesh: & yet this not despicable. And when I get back here, the same energy is bringing the men back from harvest across the fields; & old Mr. Grey, & the poor plodding nurse. Now a really comprehensive magnificent statesmanlike mind would take stock of all this human activity & direct it & weld it together. I see this possibility by fits & starts: I see human beings as at the beginning of a vast enterprise, not merely with the usual writers care for the aesthetic quality. This is a point of view which is more & more forced upon one by places like Peacehaven. All aesthetic quality is there destroyed. Only running & tumbling energy is left. The mind is like a dog going round & round to make itself a bed. So, give me new & detestable ideas, I will somehow trample a bed out of them

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Tuesday
Sept. 13th

A thousand things to be written had I time: had I power. A very little writing uses up my capacity for writing.

Laughton Place & Philip Ritchie's Death.

These as it happened, synchronised. When Vita was here 10 days ago we drove over to Laughton, & broke in, & explored the house. It seemed, that sunny morning, so beautiful, so peaceful; & as if it had endless old rooms. So I came home boiling with the idea of buying it; & so fired L: that we wrote to the farmer, Mr Russell, & waited, all on wires, edgy, gaped for an answer. He came kindly, after some days; & we were to go & see it. This arranged, & our hopes very high, I opened the Morning Post & read the death of Philip Ritchie. "He cant take houses, poor Philip" I thought. And then the usual procession of images went through my mind. Also, I think for the first time, I felt this death leaves me an elderly laggard; makes me feel I have no right to go on; as if my life were at the expense of his. And I had not been kind; not asked him to dinner & so on. So the two feelings - about buying the house & his death - fought each other: & sometimes the house won & sometimes death won; & we went to see the house & it turned out unutterably dreary; all patched & spoilt; with grained oak & grey papers: a sodden garden & a glaring red cottage at the back. I note the strength & vividness of feelings which suddenly break & foam away. Now I forget to think about Philip Ritchie.

One of these days, though, I shall sketch here, like a grand historical picture, the outlines of all

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my friends — I was thinking of this in bed last night, & for some reason I thought I would begin it with a sketch of Gerald Brenan. There may be something in this idea. It might be a way of writing the memoirs of one's own times during peoples lifetimes. It might be a most amusing book. The question is how to do it. Vita should be Orlando, a young nobleman. ~~They~~ There should be Lytton. & it should be truthful; but fantastic. Roger. Duncan. Clive. Adrian. Their lives should be related. But I can think of more books than I shall ever be able to write. How many little stories come into my head! For instance: Ethel Sands not looking at her letters. What this implies. One might write a book of short significant separate scenes. She did not open her letters.

We motored to Long Barn & back yesterday, through suburbs for the most part. All Hampstead, red, sanitary, earnest, view gazing, breeze requiring is lodged on the heights of Ashdown forest. Now & again one comes on something curiously narrowed like the Wren house at Groombridge. One stops the motor & looks. So do other motorists. We found Vita & Dotty sitting over a log fire. Dottie is going to spend £200 a year on poetry: to edit a series of books of unsaleable poetry. This £200 she was giving to the Poetry Bookshop, but deterred by his drunkenness she is crying off: & has laid it at our feet. There will be much comment she says at this. People will say she is buying her

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way into Bloomsbury. The children were there; Nigel very shabby: Vita dressed him as a Russian boy "Dont. It makes me look like a little girl" he said. There was the French tutor who never spoke. Dotty byronic in her dress. but much improved over the London Dotty. They do not yet know what is to become of Harold, who has refused to go to Buda Pesth.

And Quentin came; & the Keyneses came, & Morgan came.
All of this I meant, perhaps, to describe: but then how hard I drive my pen through one article after another — Hemingway, Morgan, Shelley: & now Biography.
Quentin won't let us play him Wagner: prefers Bach. Nessa's children are terrifyingly sophisticated: so Morgan said when Angelica, rigged up in a long black shawl acted Lady Cornflax & Lady Oldensire at Charleston. They have grown up without any opposition: nothing to twist or stunt. Hence they have reached stages at 16 or 17 which I reached only at 26 or 27.

But the summer, has never burnt; & is now ashes. Already at half past five the light out here is greyish: the wind swirling; all children indoors; & I shall write a letter or two & go into the house: sit over a fire & read, I think, biography.
But we are very happy — seldom more so, I think. Perhaps things are doing rather well. There's the motor: Dotters £200: — & L. said about Laughton place the other day "The strange thing is that we always come to the same opinion about things" — which pleased me.

289 l.

heaven. 2.45

2.120 psychology of crime & pollution.

2.166 S. shd have been abigdon.

167. knocked down for being a d—d atheist.

172. appreciate the cloud because you increased knowledge of physiography

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25th Sept. On the opposite page I wrote notes for Shelley, I think, by mistake for my writing book.

Now let me become the annalist of Rodmell.

Thirty five years ago, there were 160 families living here where there are now no more than 80. Its a decaying village, which loses its boys to the towns. Not a boy of them, said the Rev. Mr Hawkesford, is being taught to plough. Rich people wanting week end cottages buy up the old peasants houses, for fabulous sums. Monks House was offered to Mr H. for £400: we gave £700. He refused it, saying he didn't wish to ~~have~~ own country cottages. Now Mrs. Allison will pay £1200 for a couple. & we he said might get £2,000 for this. He is an old decaying man, run to seed. His cynicism,— the peasant turn of his simple worn out sayings, amuses me. He is sinking into old age, very shabby, loose limbed, wearing black wool mittens. His life is receding like a tide, slowly; or one figures him as a dying candle, whose wick will soon sink into the warm grease & be spent. To look at, he is like some aged bird; a little, small featured face, with heavily lidded smoky bright eyes; his complexion is still ruddy; but his head is like an ~~an~~ an unweeded garden. Little hairs grow weakly all over his cheeks, & two strands are drawn, like pencil marks, across his bald head. He tumbles into an arm chair,

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& tells over his stock of old village stories, ~~also~~ which always have this slightly mocking flavour, as though, completely unambitious, & by no means successful himself, he revenged himself by laughing slyly at the humours of the more energetic. He has a hit at Allinson for building; drily tells us how Capt Stamper won't pay his tithes: how Miss Julia signs the Captain's cheques for him. The others there flashily newcomers make of their field & farms market gardens. But he won't raise a finger either way, likes his cups of Indian tea, which he prefers to China, & doesn't much mind what anybody thinks. He smokes endless cigarettes, & his fingers are not very clean. Talking of his well, he said "It would be a different thing if one wanted baths" — which for some 70 years, presumably, he has done without. Then he likes a little practical talk about Aladdin lamps, for instance, & how the Rector at Iford has a device by which he makes the globe of some of the Veritas lamps wh. is cheaper to serve. It appears that the Aladdin costs 10d & 2/- but it blackens suddenly & is useless. Leaning over stiles, it is of lamp mantles that the two rectors talk. Or he will advise about making a garage: how Percy shd. cut a trench, & then old Fears should line the walls with cement. That is what he advises: & I fancy many many hours of his life have passed hobnobbing with Percy & Fears. about cement & trenches. Of his clerical character there is little visible. He would not buy Bowen a riding school he said; her

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sister did that. He didn't believe in it. She has a school at Rottingdean, keeps 12 horses, employs grooms, & has to sit all day, Sundays included. But having expressed his opinion in the family conclave, he would leave it at that. Mrs. H. would back Bowen. She would get her way. The father would slouch off to his study, where he does, heaven knows what. I asked him if he had work to do: a question which amused him a little. Not work he said; but young women to see. And then he settled into the arm chair again; & so ~~would~~ sat out a visit of over an hour & a half.

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Wed. Oct 5th. I write in the sordid doomed atmosphere of approaching departure. Pinker is asleep in one chair; Leonard is registering cheques at the little deal table under the glare of the lamp. The fire is covered with ashes, since we have been burning stuff all day, & Mrs B. never cleans. Envelopes lie in the grate. I am writing with a pen which is feeble & wispy; & it is a sharp fine evening with a sunset, I daresay.

We went to Amberley yesterday & think of buying a house there. For it is an astonishing forgotten lovely place, between water meadows & downs. So unbelieving we both are, in spite of our years.

But we are not as old as Mrs Gray, who came to thank us for our apples. She won't send to buy, as it looks like begging, since we never take money. Her face is ~~cut~~ cut into by wrinkles: they make wheals across her. She is 86, & can never remember such a summer. In her youth it was so hot in April after that they couldn't bear a stitch on them. Her youth must have been almost the same time as my fathers. She is 9 years younger, I make out: born in 1841. And what did she see of Victorian England I wonder?

1832
86
18

I can make up situations, but I cannot make up plots. That is: if I pass a lame girl, I can without knowing I do it, instantly make up a scene: (now I cant think of one) This is the germ of such fictitious gift as I have. And by the way I get letter after letter about my books, & they scarcely please me.

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Further, I we met Mary & Barbara in Brighton yesterday: Grey, tailor made, elegant, with a touch of pink, & pink silk legs. Yet I fancied some wrinkles about Mary's eyes: & a sharp line or two, made by Clive. We were affable, as people are when they meet after a coolness; we gave them buns. We were extra affable, perhaps: & the shadow of Clive loomed above us. Going to fetch L's hat from Charleston I chanced on one of those evening autumn lunchinal hours, when people want to be intimate, perhaps to boast. And he told me an absurd romantic story: of a girl, lovely, desired, half his age: & how she loved him, & he couldn't believe it: she must think me a cultivated elderly man, he said; & so "I try I try to control myself" but wondrously they went off the other day; had 4 days perfect bliss: & now "the drama begins". Mabel?, it began two days ago, on Monday. Nobody has the least idea who she is. And is it lasting, or genuine, or only a set off against Mary? & will it survive Mary's attacks? These & shall we be dragged in & so on & so on— are the thoughts which agitate us this October, which is the best of the year.

If my pen allowed. I should now try to make out a work table, having done my last article for the Tribune, & now being free again. And instantly the usual exciting devices enter my mind: a biography beginning in the year 1500 & continuing to the present day, called Orlando: Vita: only with a change about from one sex to another. I think, for a treat, I shall let myself dash this in for a week, while

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22nd Oct.

This is a book, I think I have said before, which I write after tea. And my brain was full of ideas, but I have spent them on Mr Ashcroft & Miss Findlater, fervent admirers. "I shall stringently dash this in for a week" — I have done nothing, nothing, nothing else for a fortnight; & am launched somewhat furtively but with all the more passion upon Orlando: a Biography. It is to be a small book, & written by Christmas. I thought I could combine it with Fiction, but once the mind gets hot it cant stop; I walk making up phrases; sit, contriving scenes; am in short in the thick of the greatest rapture known to me; from which I have kept myself since last February, or earlier. Talk of planning a book, or waiting for an idea! This one came in a rush; I said to pacify myself, being bored & stale with criticism & faced with that intolerable dull Fiction, "You shall write a page of a story for a treat: you shall stop sharp at 11.30 & go on with the Romantics." I had very little idea what the story was to be about. But the relief of turning my mind that way about was such that I felt happier than for months; ~~& for~~ as if put in the sun, or laid on cushions; & after two days entirely gave up my time chart & abandoned myself to the pure delight of this farce: which I enjoy as much as I've ever enjoyed anything; & have written myself into half a headache & had to come to a halt, like a tired horse & take a little sleeping draught last night: which made our breakfast fiery. I did not finish my egg. I am writing Orlando half in a mock style very clear & plain, so that people will understand every word. But the balance between truth & fantasy must be careful. It is based on Vita, Violet Trefusis, Lord Lascelles, Knole, &c.

A great many incidents to record. They come always in a rush together, these bright October days, ~~when it~~ with every one just back, fresh from solitude, cheerful, being sociable. Nessa has instituted, informally, Sunday evenings: & these

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Old Bloomsbury is to gather, after dinner — Helen Clive Roger & so on.
When I asked the time in the Press a week ago.
"Leonard can tell you" said Angus very huffily
"Ask Angus. I dont seem to know" said Leonard
very grumpy. And I saw Mrs C. lower her head over her
typing & laugh. This was the tail of a terrific quarrel about
the time between them. Angus was dismissed; but he tells
Nessa he wants to stay, could tempers be made compatible.
A bad year, this, financially, for the Press: yet prospects seem
flourishing, if only Mary & Braithwaites didnt eat up all
profits. Dottie (who comes to tea with great simplicity, but
sits a little long afterwards) is investing her £300 a year in
Stella Gibbons &c. & sends me her own poems, which I promptly
throw down the W.C. Vita stalks into the press, all red &
black (so is Orlando) says Lizzie has been shot by a farmer no, a
publican (she respects farmers, not publicans): comes up here
with me, & Harold drops in to say Good bye. We sit very
cosy & intimate for all his man about the worldliness, over the
gas: he has just been to the Foreign Office & they have been
'ever so good. Really they spoil one" he said, being
devoted to the Office, which now sends him to Berlin for 3 years.
Vita will only go for a short time she says. She likes him. She
pets him: wants me to make him a fresh cup of tea. Then theres
Clive. He has laid his stairs with the vividest green, 5 inches thick:
has every comfort & convenience. I dine there to meet ~~Harold~~ & Tom:
Tom, glum, in white waistcoat, much the man of the world; which
sets the key, & off they go telling stories about 'Jean' (Cocteau)
about Ada Leverson, Gosse, Valery, sex. & L. & I
feel a little Bloomsburyish perhaps: no, I think this sort of
talk is hardly up to the scratch. Harold does it best. He
was in Petersburg when they blew up Stolypin, & his
children: can describe the room brim full of
bomb falling from the lift: & the Empress with her
yellow eye whites; & King George throwing Mr
Britling with a violence to the floor. & I imagine

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lacking in distinction but I'm damned if I'm an alien" was his comment on some phrase of Wells'. "~~The coat~~
And that reminds me how we saw the pale dove grey coffin of Mrs Wells slide through the gates at Golders Green. It had tassels like bell pulls on it. Wells sat in bottle blue overcoat by Shaw, sobbing. One saw his white handkerchief going in & out of his pocket. Mr Page a shaggy shabby old scholar, read some typewritten sheets, by Wells, about "our friend Caroline." "Poor thing, poor silly thing" she'd say, in those days of ill repute. This colloquialism merged in the burial service; & somehow the whole effect was a little nondescript. The aim was to emphasise life: & generosity & her generous love culture: one thing touched me. "Some are seen a headland & their lives are a beacon to mankind. Others live retired & they are hardly known: but their lives are the most precious" which reminds me of what my father wrote, & meant at the moment, of my mother. Then the coffin slid away "into the furnace of material creation" & she had become part of the roses she loved, & of the sun on snow. Poor Jane! It was desperate to see what a dowdy shabby imperfect lot we looked; how feeble; how ugly for the most part. And yet we were doing our best to say something sincere about our great adventure (so Wells almost called it). And he has been adventurous & plunged about in his bath & splashed the waters, to give him his due. Afterwards we stood about congratulating. Lydia sobbed: Shaw said "You mustn't cry. Jane is well. Jane is splendid" & we went off — I to Fortnum & Masons to buy shoes.

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Sunday Nov 20th — I will now snatch a moment from what Morgan calls 'life' to write a hurried note. My notes have been few; life a cascade, a glissade, a torrent: all together. I think on the whole this is our happiest autumn. So much work; & success now: & life on easy terms: heaven knows what. My morning rushes, pell mell, from 10 to 1. I write so quick I cant get it typed before lunch. This I suppose is the main backbone of my autumn—Orlando. Never do I feel this, except for a morning or two, writing criticism. Today I began the third chapter. Do I learn anything? Too much of a joke perhaps for that; yet I like these plain sentences; & the externality of it for a change. Its too thin of course; splashed over the canvas; but I shall cover the ground by Jan. 7th (I say) & then re-write. Vita comes; Dottie comes; Clive incessant; Tom; Roger; we have our Bloomsbury evenings; for the first time I have been spending money, on a bed, on a coat (the coat, at the moment, I regret) & had a delicious sense of affluence the other day when at Long Barn I tipped Louie 5/ for a nights lodging. But the money psychology is odd; & that it doesnt give me enormous pleasure to spend. I doubt that I want anything much; yet worry about spending wrongly; & must buy an evening dress which worries me too. I have refused Sibyl; accepted Ethel. Fame increases, I think. Young men write about me in their absurd random books. Domestic life. Nelly stultus; good as gold.

This is a summary; for I have too many letters to write, & cant catch that cloud which was so heavy in my brain when I sat down.

I made Vita cry the other night; quietly, unselfconsciously. "I hate being loved" I said, of her Campbells & Valery Taylors; & that she thought meant I should be tired of her.

[illegible]YPL

30th Nov.

I have just been upstairs & tried on a hat (18/11) which I have just bought at B & H (so they call it) to wear at Sibyls lunch party tomorrow. With that money I could have bought a nightgown. Then I heard a man in a bus talk about the frightful state of gentlewomen: & "You would call me Sir, as I call you Madam." This to a working woman, dowdy pasty bleak with a baby. "Had more in 8" she said to the conductor; whom she called Young man; & he called her Ma. This is Dickens; or Shakespeare; or simply English Cockney: whichever it is I adore it; & ~~want~~ warm the cockles of my heart at it. A very happy autumn this, I repeat. Nelly raised £5, & for that reason or another is constant serenity & kindness. Offered last night to clear away. The truth is, it's only fair, as we've raised her. No trouble about people coming. After Xmas discontent will set in no doubt: when I must write criticism; the light lengthen; Nessa & Clive are all away. But I will steal a march on that depression. Moreover, aren't I proud at the moment. Ruth Draper admires me: I am to meet her on Friday at Elena Richmonds. What an incredible concatenation! So tonight I go to the Ritz to see Ruth Draper. Lunch with Sibyl; dine with Ethel; & a new dress, made from one 100 years old. These are the little waves that life makes; which keep us tossing & going up & down on top of them.

A rapid note about the lunch party. L. Dining at the Cranium. Bogey Harris: An art of light talk; about people. B. H. knows "everyone": that is no one. Maurice Baring. B. H. knows everyone: knew Big So & So. Teddy Foote?, oh yes I knew him: knows everyone: Cant admit to not knowing — a polished, burnished dinner art. Roman Catholic: In the middle M. Baring says — But Lady Beaverbrook died this morning. Sibyl says Say that again

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But Ettie— was lunching with her yesterday, says Boggy. Well it is the papers—she "dead" says Botts. Sibyl says But she was quite young. Lord Ivor asked me to meet the young man his daughter is to marry. I know Lord Ivor says, & so says Boggy— Well its odd, says Sibyl, giving up the attempt to wrestle with the death of the young at a French party— So on to wigs: Lady Charlie used to have hers curled by a sailor on deck before she got up says Boggy. Oh I've known her all my life. Went yachting with them. Lady ... eyebrow fell into the soup. Sir John Cook was so fat they had to hike him up. Once he got out of bed in the middle of the night & ~~had~~ fell on the floor where he lay 5 hours—couldn't move. Bln. sent me a pear by the waiter with a long letter. Talk of houses & horrors— all very smooth & surface talk: depends on knowing people: not on saying anything interesting. Boggy's chats are polished daily

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20th Dec.

This is ~~this~~ almost the shortest day & perhaps the coldest night of the year. We are in the black heart of a terrific frost. I notice that look of black atoms in a clear air which for some reason I can never describe to my liking. The pavement was white with great powdery flakes the other night, walking back with Roger & Helen: this was from Nessa's last Sunday—last, I fear, for many a month. But I have as usual 'no time': let me count the things I should be doing this deep winters night with Leonard at his last lecture, & Pinker asleep in her chair: I should be reading Bagenals story; Julian play; Lord Chesterfields letters; & writing to Hubert (about a cheque from the Nation). There is an irrational scale of values in my mind which puts these duties higher than mere scribbling. Angus is finally to go: we had another semi-painful interview in the Studio; when he interrupted L's dismissal with his own resignation. Not enough money. We think of Francis Birrell as partner; shall ask him tomorrow; & broach the Hogarth Miscellany.

This flashed to my mind at Nessa's children's party last night. The little creatures acting moved my infinitely sentimental throat. Angelica so mature, & composed: all grey & silver; such an epitome of all womanliness; & such an unshed bud of sense & sensibility: wearing a grey wig & a sea coloured dress. And yet oddly enough I scarcely want children of my own now. This insatiable desire to write something before I die, this ravaging sense of the shortness & feverishness of life, make me cling, like a man on a rock, to my one anchor. ~~If I~~ live to I dont like the physicalness of having children of ones own. This occurred to me at Rodmell: but I never wrote it down. I can dramatise myself as parent, it is true. And perhaps I have killed the feeling instinctively; as perhaps nature does.

I am still writing the 3rd Chap. of Orlando.

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I have had of course to give up the fancy of finishing by ~~Xmas~~ — February & printing this spring. It is drawing out longer than I meant — I have just been thinking over the Scene when O. meets a girl (Nell) in the park. & goes with her to neat room in Gerrard Street. There she will disclose frankly. They will talk. This will lead to a digression or two about women's love. This will bring in O's night life: & her clients (that's the word) Then she will see Dr. Johnson. — perhaps write (I want somehow to introduce) the To all fair Ladies. So I shall get some effect of years passing: & then there will be a description of the lights of the 18th Century burning; & the clouds of the 19th Century rising. Then on to the 19th. But I have not considered this. I want to write it all over hastily, & so keep unity of tone, which in this book is very important. It has to be half laughing, half serious: with great splashes of exaggeration.

Perhaps I shall pluck up courage to ask the Times for a rise. But could I write for my Annual I would never write for another paper. How extraordinarily unwilled by me but potent in its own right by the way Orlando was! as if it shoved everything aside to come into existence — Yet I see looking back just now to March that it is almost exactly in spirit, though not in actual facts, the book I planned then as an escapade: the spirit to be ~~Le~~ satiric, the structure wild. Precisely. Yes, I repeat, a very happy, a singularly happy autumn.

Facts are: Clive is loved by a lady in Leicestershire: Mary loves (perhaps) Lord A. She wishes to have Clive back on terms. He forgets: has a twinge now & then, but is fancy free. Mary met them walking in Cavendish Square. Raymond with Mary Valery. (so we think)

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Dec 22nd I put down this for a moment, being dull of the head, to enter a severe ~~x~~ reproof of myself to myself. The value of society is that it snubs one. I am meretricious. mediocre; a humbug; am getting into the habit of flashy talk. Tired & heated last night at the Keyneses. I was out of humour & so could see the transparency of my own sayings. Dadie said a true thing too: when V. lets her style get on top of her, one thinks only of that: when she uses clichés, one thinks what she means. But, he says, I have no logical power & live & write in an opium dream. And the dream is too often about myself.

Now with middle age drawing on, & age ahead it is important to be severe on such faults. So easily might I become a hare brained egotistic woman, exacting compliments, arrogant, narrow, withered. Nessa's children (I always measure myself against her, & find her much the ~~saner~~ largest, most humane of the two of us, think of her now with an admiration that has no envy in it: with some trace of the old childish feeling that we were in league together against the world; & how proud I am of her triumphant winning of all our battles: as she takes her way so nonchalantly, modestly, almost anonymously past the goal, with her children round her; & only a little added tenderness (a moving thing in her) which shows me that she too feels ~~or~~ wonder surprise at having passed so many terrors & sorrows safe—
the dream is too often about myself. To correct this; & to forget one's own sharp absurd little personality, reputation & the rest of it, one should read; see outsiders; think more; write more logically; above all be full of work; & practise anonymity. Silence in company; or the quietest statement, not the showiest, is also 'indicated' as the doctors say. It was an empty party, rather, last night. Very nice here, though; & F.B. is I think willing.

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